

VZCZCXRO0609
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLU #0172/01 0600613
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 290613Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY LUANDA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4622
RHMFIUU/COMUSNAVEUR NAPLES IT PRIORITY
INFO RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCGEVC/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 LUANDA 000172

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OTRA](#) [MAAR](#) [PREL](#) [AO](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR ADMIRAL FITZGERALD'S MARCH 4-5
VISIT TO ANGOLA

¶1. (SBU) My staff and I warmly welcome your visit to Luanda March 4-6. This visit provides an excellent opportunity to capitalize on the positive momentum established during the February 21-23 visit of the HSV Swift and follow up on some of the issues addressed by General Ward during his December 2007 visit. Progress has stalled on the centerpiece of our mil-mil relationship, the proposed bilateral work plan first suggested in 2006, and visits such as these are key to moving our bi-lateral dialogue forward.

Overview

¶2. (SBU) Angola's political and military leadership continues to be wary of U.S. intentions, especially concerning Africom and our goals for military engagement with the region in general and with Angola in particular. Increasingly, Angola is angling to take a leadership role in regional peace and security organizations such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU).

¶3. (U) Six years after the end in 2002 of a 27-year civil war, Angola is at a pivotal juncture in its development and reconstruction. A democratic, stable and economically prosperous Angola is vital to both regional stability and prosperity and US national security interests. Our principal goals are consolidating Angola's democratic transition and strengthening the country's ability to more efficiently use its vast mineral wealth to improve the well-being of all citizens.

¶4. (SBU) Perhaps the greatest constraint to improving our ties with the Angolan government and the military in particular is our history with Angola. President dos Santos has publicly chastised the powers that interfered in colonial Angola for not helping rebuild the country after decades of civil war, and he includes the U.S. in that group. Many of Angola's civilian and military leaders fought against rebels backed by the U.S. and blame the U.S. for the suffering inflicted by those rebels on their families. Some Angolans seek to strengthen ties with the U.S., including Armed Forces Chief, Gen. Furtado, but many others, including the still powerful and influential Minister of Defense, are wary.

Military Cooperation

¶5. (SBU) Angola's military (110,000 soldiers) is regarded as one of the better African forces. As Angola transitions into a post-conflict force structure, GRA officials are planning to reduce its standing military to around 50,000 personnel. Angola is the head of the peace and security councils of both

SADC and the African Union. Angola has welcomed its leadership position on these multi-lateral councils, and is consulting closely with its African neighbors on a wide range of regional security issues, including the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These multi-lateral groups are key in forming regional opinion on U.S. involvement on the continent through Africom and in shaping regional responses to diplomatic trouble spots, such as Zimbabwe.

¶6. (SBU) As Angola increases its efforts to become a regional player, bilateral engagement with the U.S. and NATO allies is slowing down (with the exception of Portugal), while engagement with others, notably Israel and Russia, is increasing. During your visit last year, the Angolans promised renewed cooperation, but Angolan lack of participation in our IMET program, ACSS conferences, various offers of assistance and a bilateral work plan indicate that we have not yet overcome suspicions generated by our role in the Angolan civil war. It remains to be seen whether recent openness to dialogue will translate into concrete action.

¶7. (SBU) Coming on the heels of General Ward's and the HSV Swift's visit, your visit is can futhere help to dispel misconceptions about our intentions both regionally and in Angola. Discussing your vision for Africom's engagement in the region would address many of the concerns voiced by other African leaders in the international press. Once Angolan leaders better understand Africom, they could play a helpful role in defining this vision. While reaching agreement with the Angolans to formalize our bilateral military-to-military engagement through the signing of a Bilateral Military Cooperation Agreement would represent a ground-breaking step forward in our relationship, this is seen as a long-term

LUANDA 00000172 002 OF 003

goal.

Politics and Elections

¶8. (SBU) While nominally a multi-party democracy, Angola's government is dominated by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and a very strong chief executive (now in office for 28 years) - Jose Eduardo Dos Santos. Angola's only democratic elections since independence in 1975 were held in 1992. The result was contested by Jonas Savimbi, leader of the opposition party Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and resulted in the resumption of civil war. Savimbi was killed in battle in February 2002, and a formal peace accord was signed shortly thereafter.

¶9. (U) In December 2006, President Dos Santos and opposition parties reached agreement to hold legislative elections in 2008 and presidential elections in 2009. Voter registration was completed in September 2007, with over 8 million Angolans registering to vote. In a December 28th speech, President dos Santos announced that legislative elections would be held on September 5th and 6th 2008; while he must still formally call elections 90 days prior to the election, all signs indicate the oft-postponed elections are actually on track for 2008.

¶10. (U) U.S. assistance for democracy-building and good governance in FY 07 was approximately \$7.5 million. Our programs are administered through USAID and executed by International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International IFES. They focus on building civil society capacity, strengthening political parties, and providing limited technical assistance to the Angolan government.

Human Rights Improving, but Capacity a Constraint

¶11. (U) Angola's human rights record continues to show areas

where improvements are needed. The country's overburdened judicial system remains a poor protector of individual rights. Several high-profile cases in 2007 drew attention to the role of the government in fueling self-censorship of the media and continuing restrictions on the freedom of movement within Angola for journalists and others. Elements of the military and police security forces continue to show a disregard for human rights and the government has failed to transparently investigate allegations of abuse. A high-profile report released in December 2007 by Doctors without Borders accused Angolan security forces of severely abusing and systematically raping illegal Congolese immigrants during expulsion operations in the remote province of Lunda Norte; despite the Army Chief of Staff's promise that the allegations would be investigated, no further report has been issued.

¶12. (U) Prisons are overcrowded with harsh conditions, especially in the provinces. The NGO movement is still nascent, but there are some indigenous organizations tracking human rights abuses and working with the GRA to train the national police on human rights issues.

¶13. (U) USG-funded programs have helped train police through the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) Gaborone facility. In addition, USG funded international organization partners in Angola have provided training on specific issues such as trafficking in persons and child rights. The USG, in conjunction with the Government of Portugal, is carrying out a project of court automation with the Ministry of Justice.

Economics

¶14. (U) Angola's economy is one of the fastest growing in the world, driven by booming oil production. Production, officially capped by OPEC at 1.9 million barrels per day (bpd), is projected to reach over 2.2 million bpd by the end of 2008. Angola's economy grew by 19.5 percent in 2006 and 23.4 percent in 2007, and is expected to match or beat that pace in 2008. Inflation was reduced from triple digits near the end of the war to just under 12 percent last year. Thanks again to petroleum revenue, foreign exchange reserves

LUANDA 00000172 003 OF 003

are growing. Angola is our seventh largest source of foreign oil. Thanks to oil revenue and to extensive lines of credit supplied by the Chinese, Portuguese, Brazilians, and other governments, Angola is now in the midst of major infrastructure rebuilding.

¶15. (U) Angola's tremendous oil wealth has allowed it to come out from under a severe debt burden generated during the civil war years. The government deficit is under control and foreign reserve accounts are flush with capital from extractive industries, namely oil and diamonds. Outside these industries, however, the Angolan economy continues to sputter. Agriculture is slowly returning to the countryside, while manufacturing and service industries are scarce and generate few jobs to address the nation's burgeoning unemployment problem.

¶16. (U) According to the World Bank's 2007 "Doing Business" index, Angola ranks 167 out of 178 countries in promoting an open and efficient business climate. Angola's rankings in the categories of "starting a business" (173 out of 178) and "enforcing contracts" (176 out of 178) are of particular concern.

Development and US Assistance

¶17. (U) While Angola shows signs of growth and development, the country still has some of the lowest development indicators in the world. Although statistical data are imprecise, best international estimates are that sixty-eight

percent of the population lives in poverty, 26 percent in abject poverty. Life expectancy is forty-seven years, more than 30 percent lower than the average for developing nations; infant mortality, maternal mortality and other measures of the quality of life are among the worst in the world. Fertility is very high - an average of 6.9 births per woman.

¶18. (U) Our USAID programs are aimed at assisting Angola to address the many major challenges it faces to achieving long-term stability and progress in translating wealth into an appreciably improved quality of life for its citizens. Our flagship program is the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), which seeks to halve by 2010 mortality from malaria among children under five - and we're on track to do that. The Angolan government, in particular the Health Ministry, has been closely involved in the program and collaboration with other donors is strong. In FY07, the second year of implementation, PMI sprayed over 110,000 houses (reaching over 500,000 Angolans), distributed over 90,000 bed nets and furnished over 2.4 million treatments for malaria.

¶19. (U) The USG is also highly visible in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Angola presents a unique opportunity to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to CDC data, Angola has a relatively low prevalence rate (2.5% among adults in 2006), but areas bordering higher-prevalence countries have rates four to five times as large and are rising. Still, many of the factors conducive to an increase in the rate of HIV/AIDS are in place: the early age of sexual debut, the common occurrence of multiple partners, and improved transportation routes, which encourage greater interaction with neighboring countries with significantly greater rates. The USG - CDC, USAID, DOS and DOD - is working closely with the Angolan Ministry of Health, private partners and NGOs to implement the national plan against HIV-AIDS. A more complete survey is now underway to measure prevalence; results are expected in December.

¶20. (U) Angola also remains one of the most heavily land-mined countries in the world, and USG assistance provides around USD 5.5 million to support humanitarian landmine clearance and the destruction of excess and unstable weapons and munitions. We also support capacity-building within the Angolan National Demining Commission to strengthen the Angolan capacity to manage the national demining program and take over the major role played by international NGOs in landmine clearance.

FERNANDEZ